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THE HANDS OF SHANG-CHI.

MASTER OF KUNG FU

SHADOWS
OF THE PAST!



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TM

"Call me Shang-Chi, as my **father** did, when he raised me in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. I learned many things from my father: that my name means 'The Rising and Advancing of a Spirit,' and that my body could be forged into a living weapon through the discipline of kung fu. Since then, I have learned that my father is **Dr. Fu Manchu**, the most insidiously evil man on Earth... and that to **honor** him would bring nothing but **dishonor** to the spirit of my **name**."

Stan Lee
PRESENTS:

MASTER OF KUNG FU!

Featuring supporting characters created by SAX ROHMER

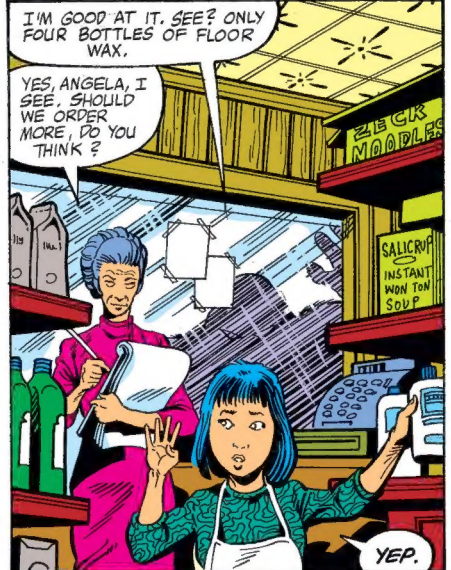
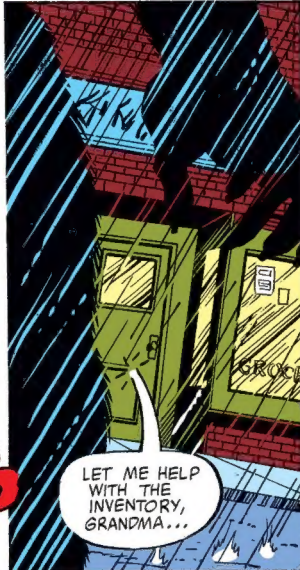
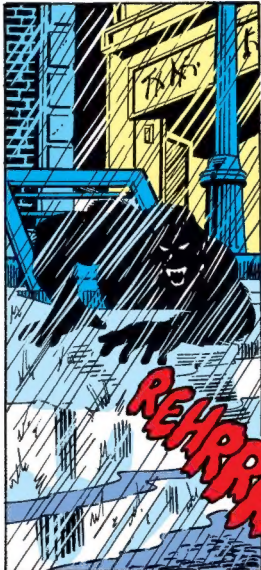
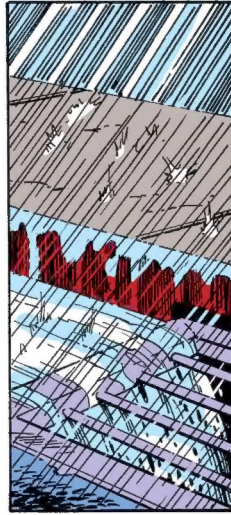
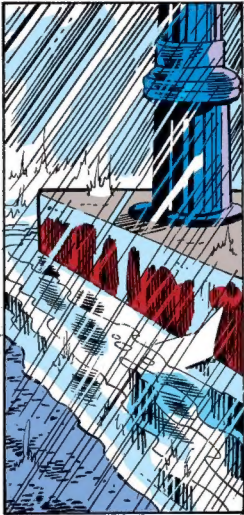
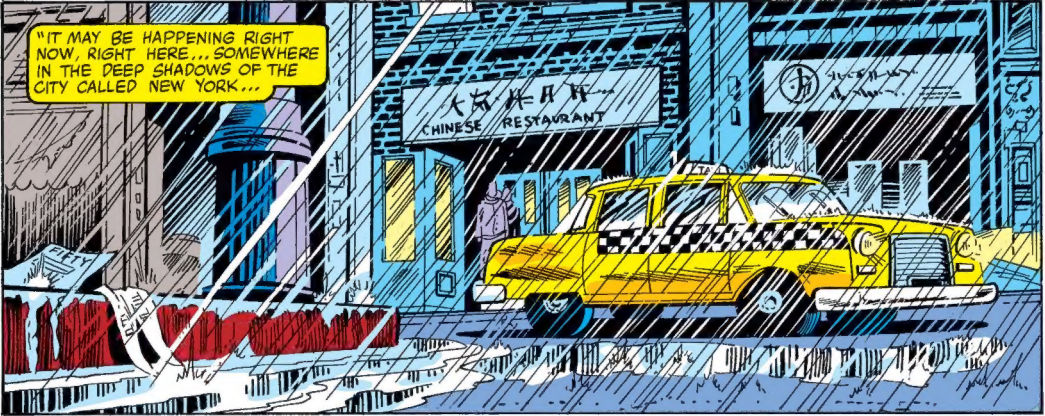
SHADOWS OF A SILENT PAST

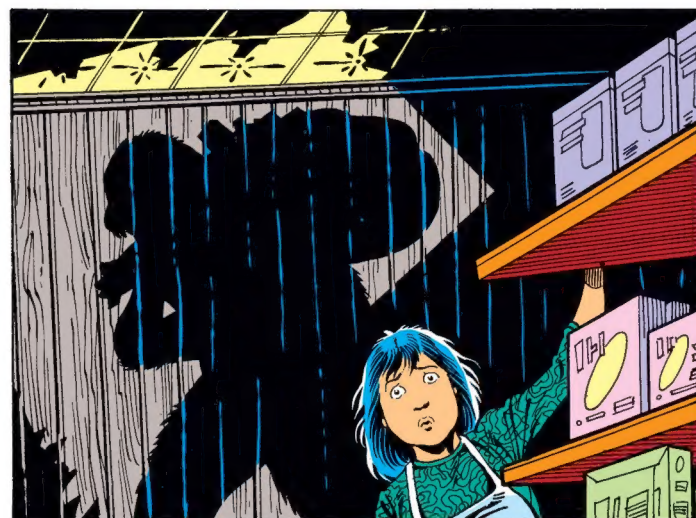
"MONTHS AGO, THE THREAT POSED BY MY FATHER FU MANCHU WAS APPARENTLY ENDED..."

"...BUT STILL I AM HAUNTED BY SHADOWS FROM THE PAST ...AND PERHAPS SHADES OF THE FUTURE."

"INDEED, I AM POSSESSED BY THE FEELING THAT SOMETHING MAY HAPPEN SOON... **MUST** HAPPEN SOON. IT IS INEVITABLE, AND THE CERTAINTY MAKES MY FLESH **CRAWL**."

DOUG MOENCH / MIKE ZECK / GENE DAY / JIM NOVAK / BOB SHAREN / JIM SALICRUP / JIM SHOOTER
WRITER / ARTIST / INKER / LETTERER / COLORIST / EDITOR / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF





"AFTER THE LONG NIGHT OF HARD RAIN, THE CITY IS CLEANER, BRIGHTER THAN I HAVE EVER BEFORE SEEN..."

SO, SHANG-CHI, THANKS TO YOU, IT APPEARS THE GANG VIOLENCE IN CHINATOWN HAS ABATED.

YOU ARE FULLY AS EXTRAORDINARY AS MY SISTER LEIKO CLAIMED.

HONG KONG EMBASSY

"LEIKO'S BROTHER DAVID SEEMS WEARY, STRAINED BY HIS OWN DEMANDS UPON HIMSELF, BUT GENUINELY PLEASED..."

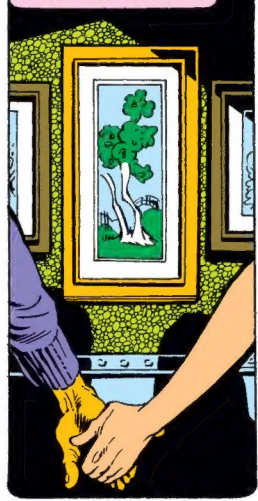
ANYWAY, I'VE BEEN SO BUSY WITH MY TASKS HERE AT THE EMBASSY THAT I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO SPEAK WITH YOU IN DAYS. WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING?

LEIKO HAS BEEN ACQUAINTING ME WITH THE MORE PLEASANT SIDES OF NEW YORK, DAVID...

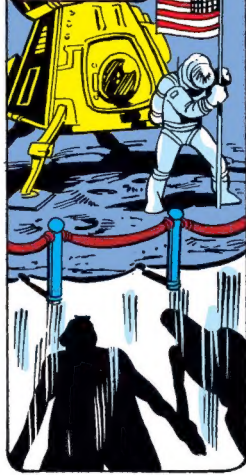
"AND I TELL HIM OF SOFTER NIGHTS..."



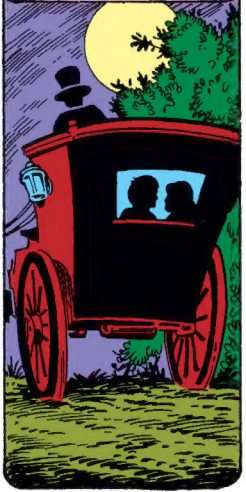
"... FILLED WITH MORE GENTLE SHADOWS..."



"...TIMES WHEN DARKNESS INTRUDED UPON LIGHT WITH FAVOR..."



"... AND THE CONTRASTING HARMONIES OF LOVE..."



"AND IT CAUSES ME TO THINK PERHAPS LAST NIGHT'S PREMONITION WAS WRONG, MERELY THE LURKING SHADOWS OF A GUILT BORN OF TOO MUCH HAPPINESS..."

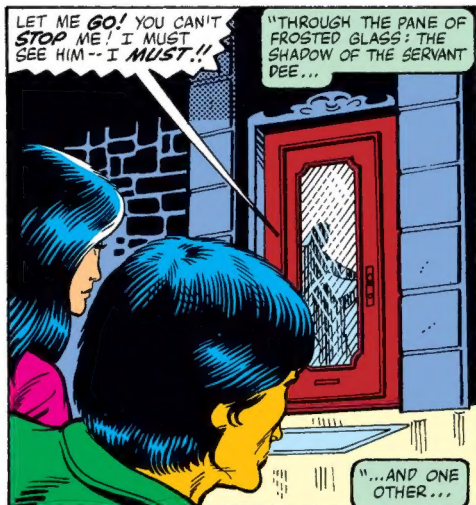
AH, THEN YOU'VE FINALLY BEEN GETTING YOUR MUCH-NEEDED NEW YORK REST. DOES THE WORLD NOW LOOK A BIT BETTER TO YOU?

A BIT, YES, QUITE A BIT.

BUT WE'D STILL LIKE TO STAY HERE AT THE EMBASSY A WHILE LONGER, DAVID-- BEFORE WE RETURN TO ENGLAND.

OF COURSE, SISTER, EVENTS AROUND HERE SHOULD BE MUCH CALMER, MORE PEACEFUL, NOW THAT I'VE --

NO!!



LET ME GO! YOU CAN'T STOP ME! I MUST SEE HIM-- I **MUST**!!

"THROUGH THE PANE OF FROSTED GLASS: THE SHADOW OF THE SERVANT DEE..."

"...AND ONE OTHER..."



"...A YOUNG GIRL."

I MUST SEE YOU, AMBASSADOR WU! A **MONSTER**-- IT CAME INTO MY GRANDMA'S GROCERY STORE AND ATTACKED HER! YOU MUST HELP-- THEY SAID YOU WOULD **HELP**!

EVERYONE IN CHINATOWN SAYS ONLY **YOU** CAN HELP !!



"LEIKO QUICKLY COMFORTS HER WITH SOOTHING WORDS..."

HUSH NOW. WHAT'S YOUR NAME, CHILD?

I... I TRIED TO STOP HER, SIR, BUT SHE BROKE FREE, AND--

A-ANGELA...

IT'S ALL RIGHT, DEE. YOU MAY LEAVE US NOW.



A "MONSTER", DAVID?

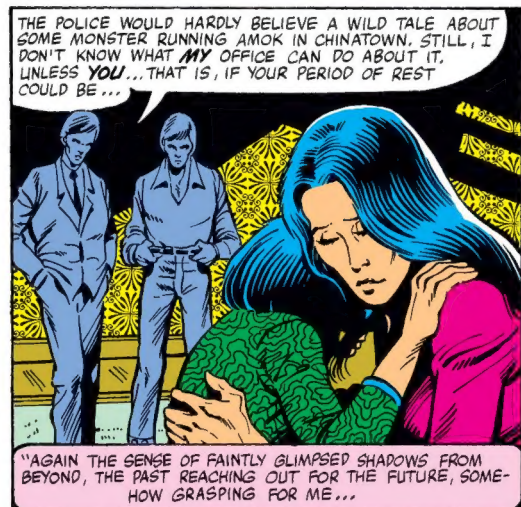
YES, AND IT'S NOT THE FIRST TIME I'VE HEARD SUCH A STORY.

I'VE ALWAYS DISMISSED IT AS A PRANK OR SUPERSTITION. QUITE CONDESCENDING, I SUPPOSE, SINCE **SOMETHING** MUST BE CAUSING ALL THE TROUBLE HERE.



ALWAYS IN CHINATOWN?

YES, AND THIS IS ONE TIME I'M **GLAD** THEIR MISTRUST OF THE POLICE BRINGS THEM TO ME INSTEAD.



THE POLICE WOULD HARDLY BELIEVE A WILD TALE ABOUT SOME MONSTER RUNNING AMOK IN CHINATOWN. STILL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT **MY** OFFICE CAN DO ABOUT IT, UNLESS **YOU**... THAT IS, IF YOUR PERIOD OF REST COULD BE ...

"AGAIN THE SENSE OF FAINTLY GLIMPSED SHADOWS FROM BEYOND, THE PAST REACHING OUT FOR THE FUTURE, SOMEHOW GRASPING FOR ME..."

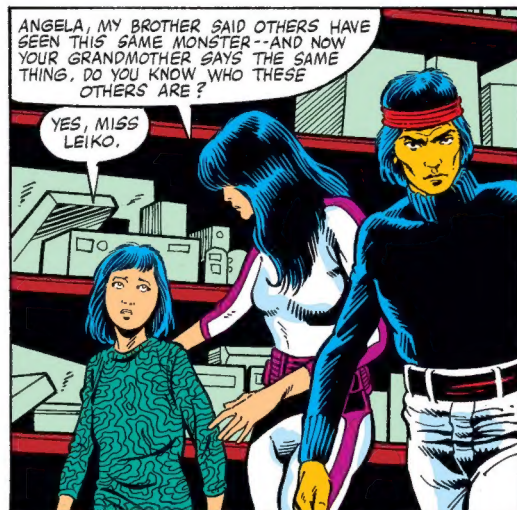
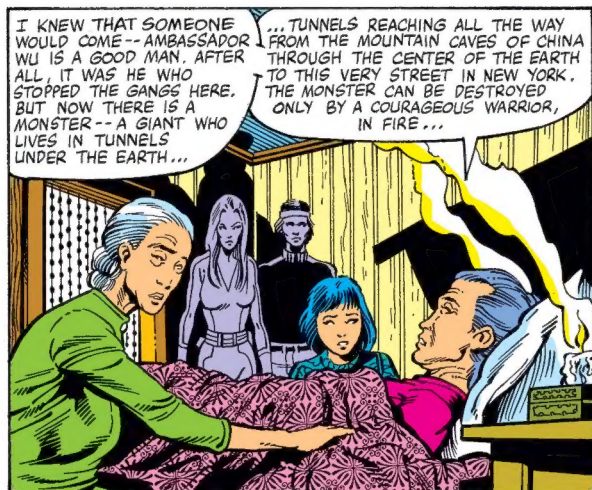
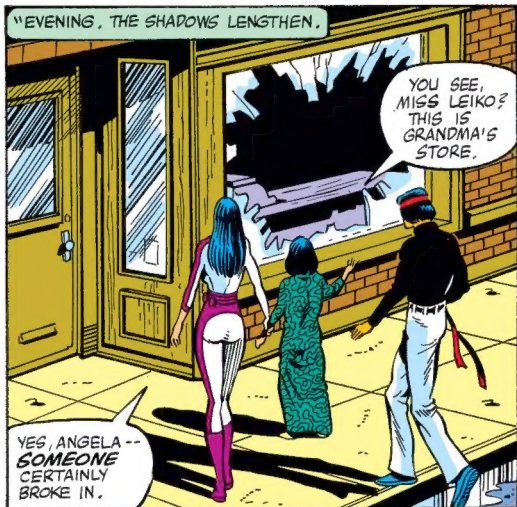


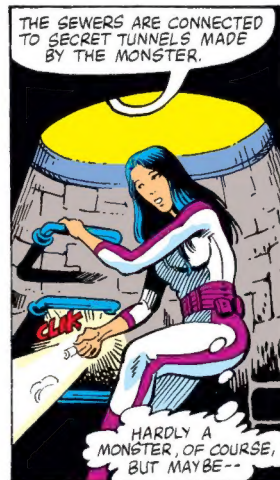
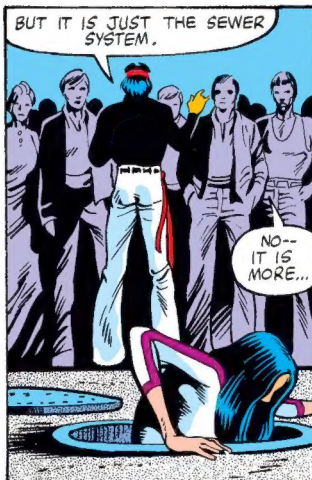
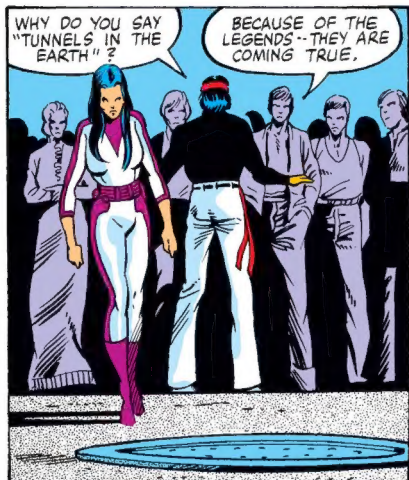
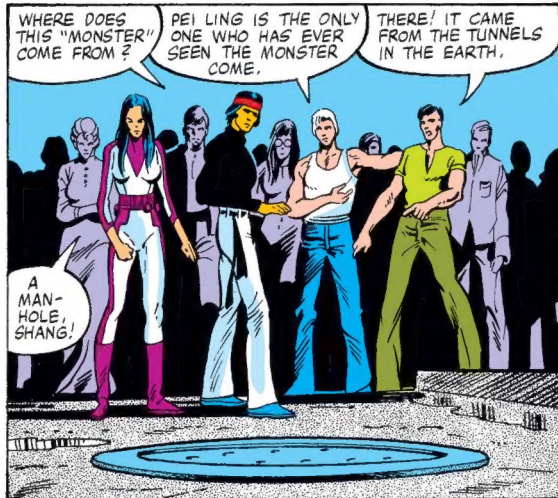
"... SOME KIND OF FATE OR UNFINISHED DESTINY..."

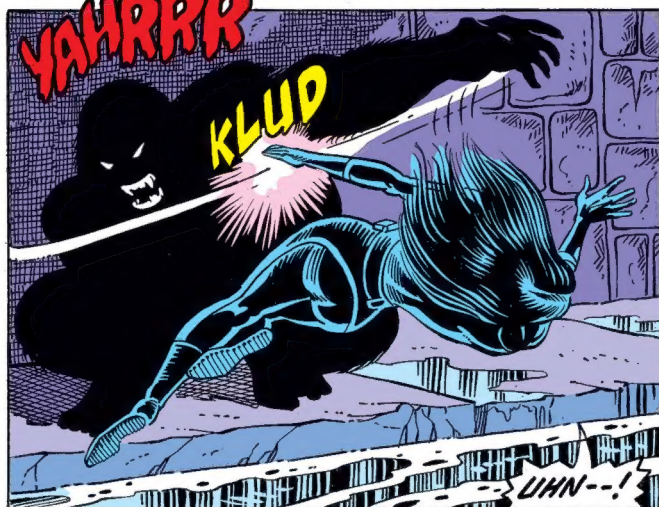
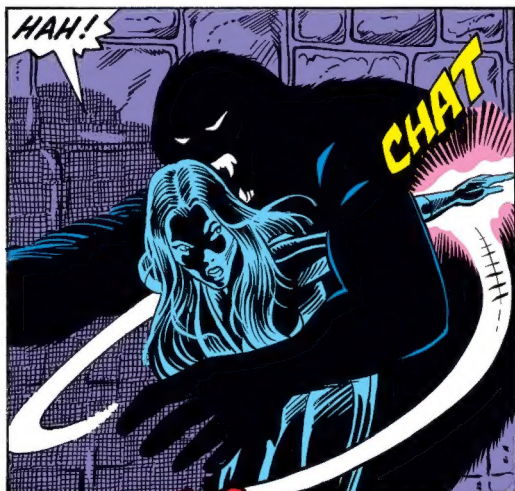
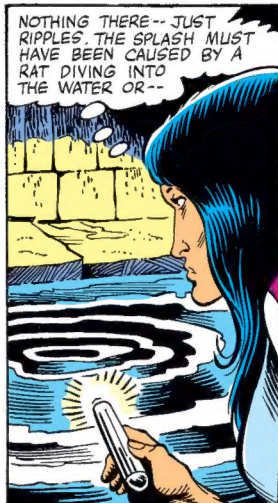
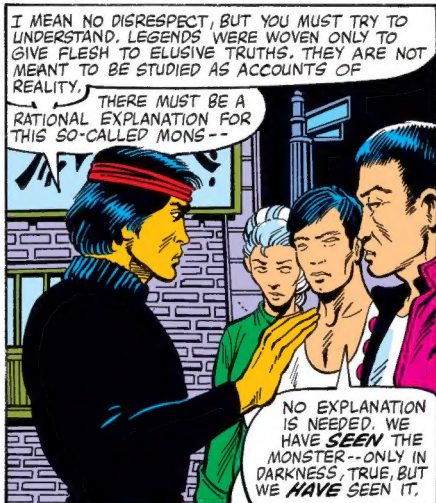
YES, DAVID. OUR REST CAN BE INTERRUPTED. AFTER ALL, YOUR CLAIM OF PEACE AND CALM AROUND HERE IS GREATLY EXAGGERATED.

WE WILL TAKE THE GIRL HOME AND SEE WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT.

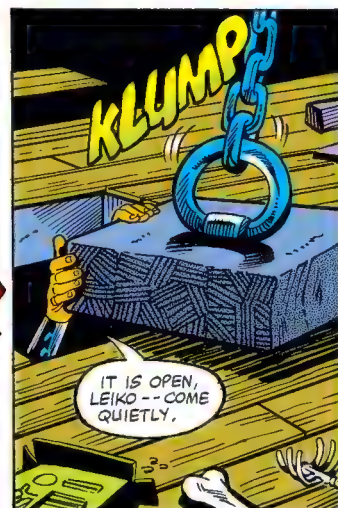
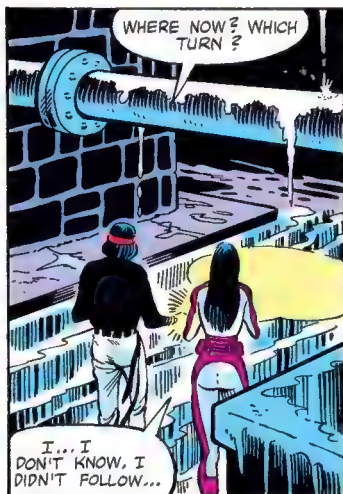
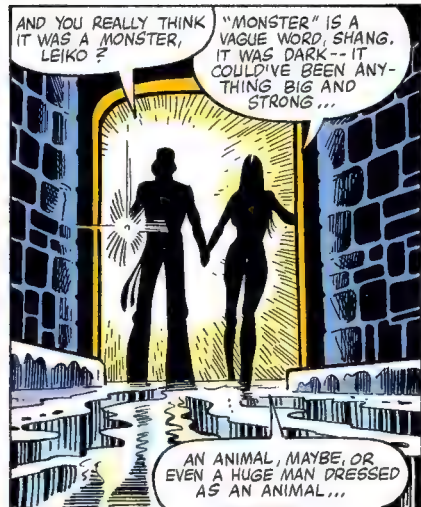
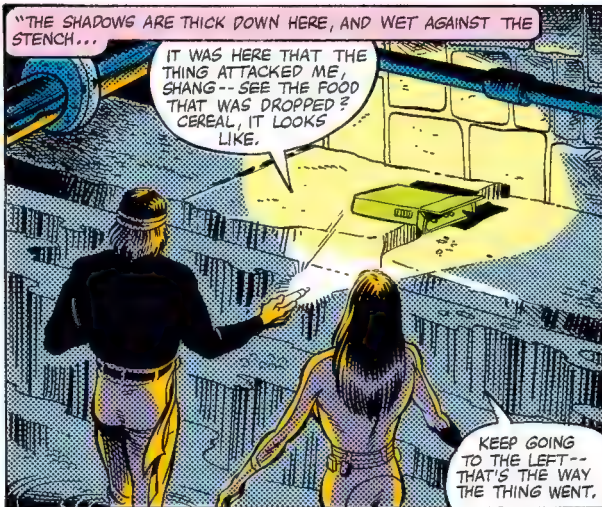
THERE, ANGELA-- YOU SEE? WE'RE GOING TO HELP YOU!

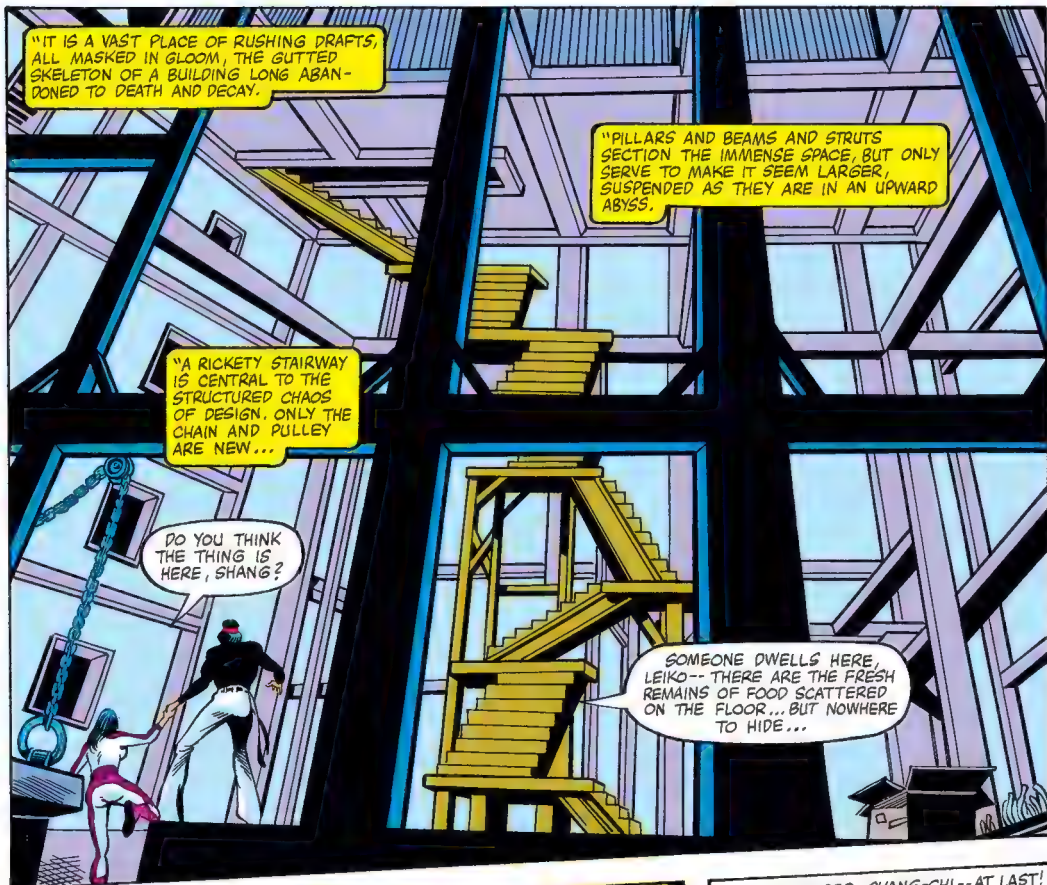






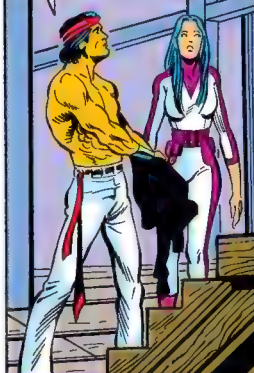






EXCEPT IN THE TOP FLOOR, SHANG--PART OF IT'S ENCLOSED, AND THE STAIRWAY LEADS TO AN OPENING IN ITS FLOOR.

THEN WE MUST MOUNT THE STAIRWAY.



"I PREPARE MYSELF--AS THE PREMONITION GROWS STRONGER, AGAIN STIRRING MY FLESH.

"IT HAPPENS NEAR THE TOP. A DARK SHAPE RIPS ITSELF FROM THE DEEPER DARKNESS--



"-- BUT HALTS, AS IF MERELY GUARDING THE ENTRANCE.

YOU'RE TRAPPED, SHANG-CHI--AT LAST! TRAPPED, SON OF FU MANCHU, BETWEEN ME AND MY FRIEND--MY ALLY, MY SERVANT!

WHO ARE YOU, SI-FAN?

I AM A DWELLER IN DARKNESS--!



SENT BY CELESTIAL FU MANCHU TO SLAY YOU, I AM NOW THE LAST ONE LEFT! THE OTHERS WENT OUT TO FIND YOU AND NEVER RETURNED. WE WERE SOON TO MOVE ON TO LONDON, BUT I REMAINED, PLEDGED TO CARRY OUT MY MISSION.

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU... WAITING FOR THIS MOMENT WHICH HAS NOW ARRIVED, AND NOW--AT LAST!-- I SHALL FULFILL GLORIOUS FU MANCHU'S COMMAND!

LEIKO, WATCH THE MONSTER ABOVE.

THAT WAS YEARS AGO, SI-FAN! FU MANCHU IS NO LONGER BASED IN NEW YORK -- NOR HAVE I BEEN HERE IN YEARS!

FU MANCHU IS GONE-- PERHAPS EVEN DEAD!

FU MANCHU WILL NEVER DIE!!

PERHAPS NOT, BUT HIS WAR IS ENDED! HIS COMMANDS TO YOU BELONG IN THE DEAD PAST!

NO! I AM CUNNING-- TOO CUNNING TO BE DECEIVED!

THIS IS *NOW*-- IT IS THE PRESENT! I *KNOW* IT IS! AND MY TRAP HAS LONG BEEN PREPARED! WHEN THE OTHERS FAILED TO RETURN, I WENT OUT TO SEEK A NEW ALLY--

IT'S NOT MOVING, SHANG... YET.

-- BUT THE PEOPLE HERE CANNOT BE TRUSTED, SO I FREED MY *FRIEND*. MADE HIM TRUST ME BY FEEDING HIM. THEN I TRAINED HIM. AND NOW HE FEEDS ME -- BRINGS ME EVERYTHING I NEED! NOW HE WILL BRING ME YOUR *HEAD* SON OF FU MANCHU!

SHANG, IT... IT MIGHT LUNGE AT ANY MOMENT-- BETTER TO TAKE OUR CHANCES WITH THE MADMAN BELOW.

YES.

NO!!

CHOK

MY TRAP IS PERFECT! I WON'T LET YOU ESCAPE IT!!

"THE STAIRWAY SWAYS CRAZILY NOW, ITS SUPPORTS SHORN IN FLAME..."

SHANG--THE FIRE'S RISING!

WE HAVE NO CHOICE NOW, LEIKO! WE MUST GO UP...

"...TO GREET A MONSTER WHO WOULD BLOCK OUR PATH, AND TURN US AWAY INTO DEATH."

WUMP

"INSTEAD, THE MONSTER FALLS."

"ABOVE, FLICKERING CANDLES DIMLY LIGHT THE LAIR OF A MONSTER AND HIS 'FRIEND'..."

HE... HE HAS LIVED HERE FOR YEARS -- ALONE WITH HIS MAD COMMAND, HIS DEMENTED DREAM.

IT... IT'S LIKE THE CRAZED WORLD WAR II JAPANESE SOLDIERS, SHANG -- HIDING OUT IN THE PHILIPPINE JUNGLES UNTIL THE EARLY SEVENTIES, UNAWARE THAT THE WAR HAD LONG SINCE ENDED. THE SI-FAN AND HIS PET HAVE BEEN AWAITING THIS FINAL BATTLE!

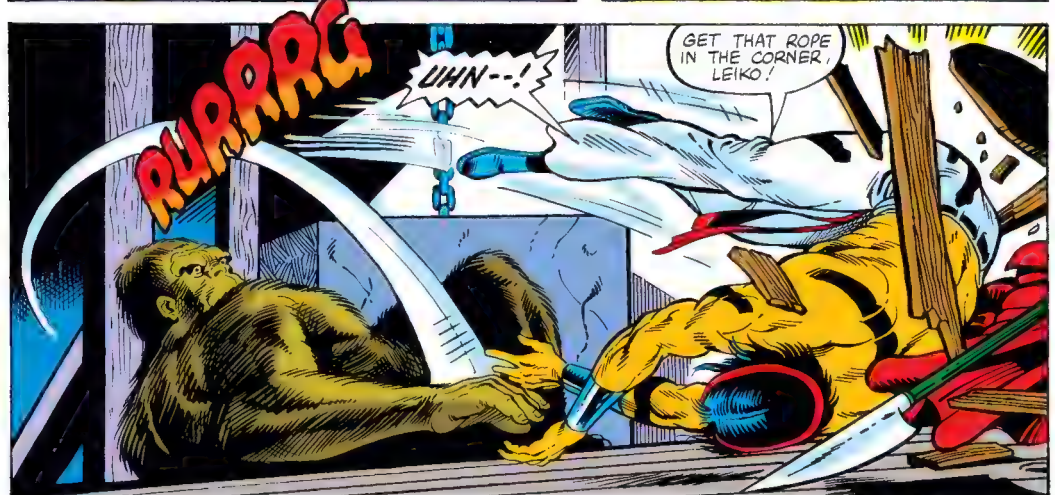
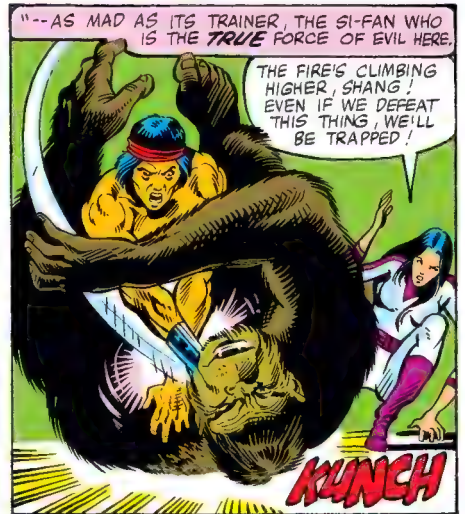
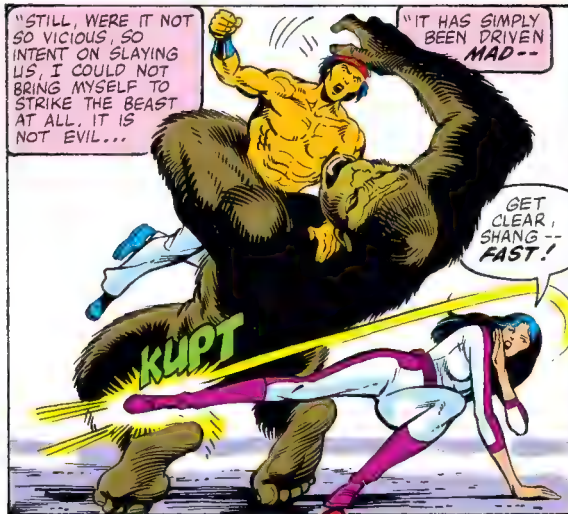
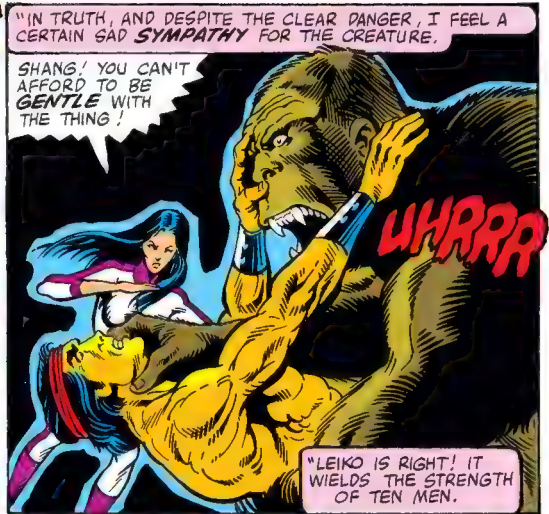
BUT WE'VE GOT TO FIND SOME OTHER WAY OUT OF HERE, SHANG, IF THERE IS ONE!

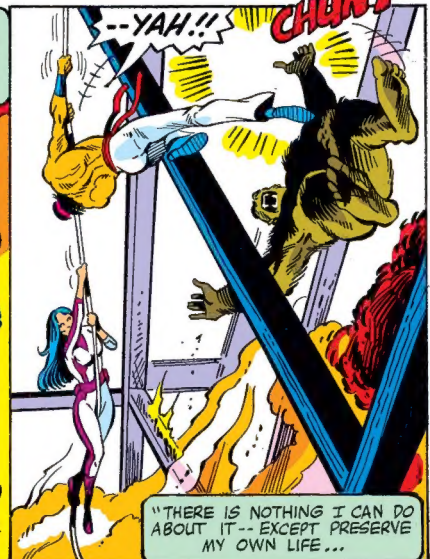
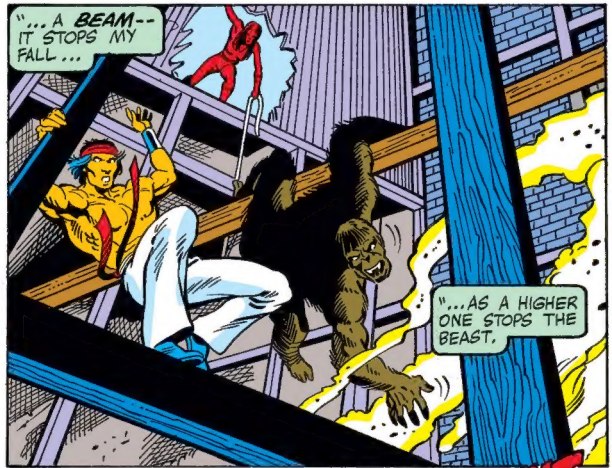
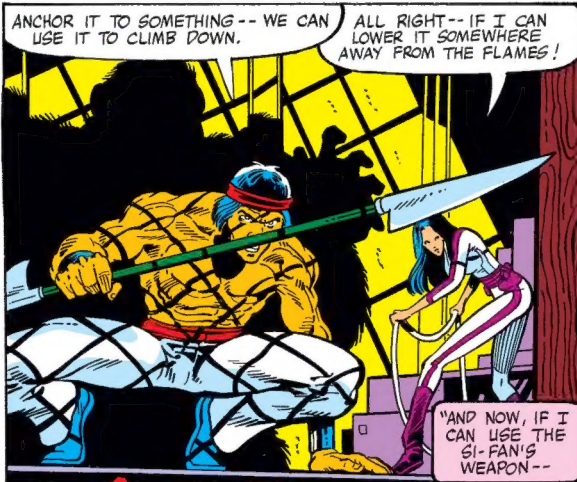
RAHRR

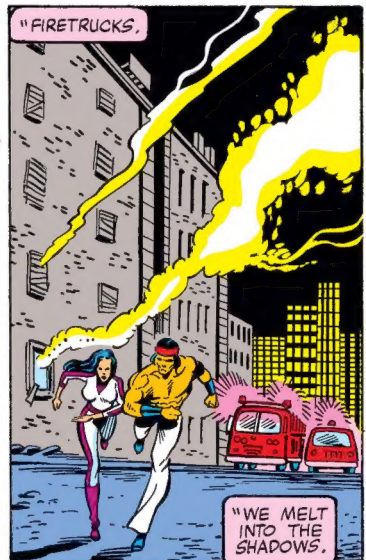
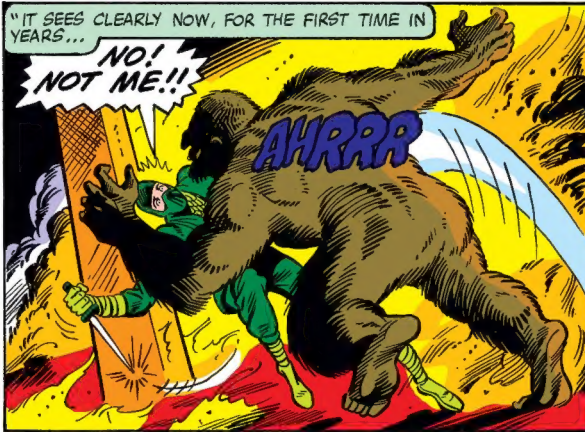
"BEHIND US --"

"--THE MONSTER SOMEHOW STOPPED ITS FALL BEFORE REACHING THE BOTTOM..."

"...AND NOW, HAS CLIMBED QUICKLY."







THE FINAL SECRET OF TRIGGERS, KARMIC AND COSMIC

Dear Doug Moench,

I just picked up for the first time in about eight months an issue of *MASTER OF KUNG FU* and it was incredible! I'm talking about #83 — "The Phoenix and the Snake." I'm now convinced that Fu Manchu is nothing less than the leader of that fabled secret society, the Illuminati. Even the title gives some evidence of this; the Phoenix was the secret name of Aleister Crowley, an infamous Illuminati conspirator, when he was in the Ordo Templi Orientis. Also, the ancient Egyptians placed Sirius, the dog-star which is associated with the Illuminati, in the constellation of Phoenix. On page 27 Fu Manchu says, "Orientis Illuminati." This is the crowning piece of evidence, coupled with Fah Lo Suee's statement, "You are the one true light of illumination." This, however, is only the tip of the iceberg. 23 is a number with mystical meaning among the Illuminati, as is 666. At the beginning of the story Fu refers to his followers (among them the Hashishen) as members of the 23rd sect and, moreover, as members of the Order of the Golden Dawn — which is the name of a group of Bay Area Illuminati-oriented witches. The Hashishen were the first Illuminati in 1090 A.D. Their leader was Hassan i Sabbah, just in case his name comes up. The symbol of the Illuminati was the Eye in the Triangle or Pyramid, which appears numerous times in this story. First: Fu Manchu walks through a triangular portal with an eye painted atop it. Second; he forms the eye in the pyramid with his fingers and right eye while bathing in the elixir. Third; he envisions the mystic numbers 23, 5, and 666 (in a pyramid, no less) and a golden apple along with the eye in the pyramid on page 11. Last, he says, "I smoked... the bitter taste of sweet dreams." I believe he was smoking hashish, since he immediately experiences seemingly drug-induced visions. If this is so, then even more evidence has been given that Fu Manchu is an Illuminati, since many Illuminati sects (including the Hashishen, of course) used hashish in their rituals. Congratulations on a great job. Keep it up.

Michael Perkins
(no address given)

Holy Illuminati!!

*Fu Manchu as the *Golden Dawn*?! What would Aleister Crowley think?!

*Thugees? Hashishen? Templars? Holy Kaballah! Great Hassan i Sabbah! Great eye in the triangle! GREAT GOD 23!!

*My mind boggles, my liver quakes, my brain squirms... because I know... THE ILLUMINATI ARE AT WORK AGAIN!!

*Will the forces of ORDER, the Pentagon-people, the ULTIMATE CONSPIRACY TRIUMPH?!

*NO.

(ORDER=CHAOS...) HAIL ERIS!!

Rev. Gonzo, Cult of Eris
Church of the Lopsided Trapezoid
1102 Nevada St.
Bellingham, Wash. 98225

Dear Doug, Mike, and Gene:

Actually, this letter is addressed primarily to Doug Moench, but the rest of you are doing a fabulous job, as I've pointed out before.

Plotwise: So Fu Manchu is back. I expected it. I was waiting for it. But I didn't expect *this*! Doug, this isn't just Fu Manchu; this is Aleister Crowley, the Illuminati, and Fu all squashed together!

Before I go on, I recommend that the audience at home go out and buy all three volumes of *ILLUMINATUS!* by Robert Anton Wilson and Robert Shea, right away. Apparently, Mr. Moench has read them.

For instance, the montage at the bottom of page 11: To the uninitiated it is nonsense. The numbers 5 and 23 have various arcane significances — especially to that secret organization plotting to control the world, otherwise known as the Illuminati. The golden apple is the symbol of those

forces opposing the Illuminati. 666 refers to the "number of the beast" — the kabbalistic name that Aleister Crowley took for himself. The "peace symbol" is the shape of the crosses on which earlier prophets were crucified upside-down. The swastika and calf's skull are inexplicable to the uninitiated but figure prominently in Illuminati lore. The eye in the pyramid is as old as the Illuminati themselves and appears, coincidentally (?), on the back of the dollar bill. It also appears five times in issue #83.

Again, on page 6, Fu Manchu affirms his association with the Illuminati, if only unconsciously. The Si-Fan, Phansigars, and Thugees have always been associated with Fu, but the Hashishen and the Knights Templar are new. However, the Hashishen (from whose name we get the word "assassin") and the Knights Templar (who may or may not still be in existence) are groups clearly associated with the Illuminati.

Lastly, Fu calls his latest organization The Order of the Golden Dawn — in ignorance, I hope, of Crowley, who started his own mystical group with a similar name. Incidentally, the snake on Fu's talisman should have its tail in its mouth. Excelsior!

Phil Jones
2851 Gervais Street
Columbia, S.C. 29204

Dear Doug,

Concerning MOK #83: Specifically, the recurrent eye-in-the-pyramid, the references to illumination, enlightenment, the left-hand path, the numbers 5 and 23, the golden apple and the Cross of Lilith Velkor — are we beset with one of those unavoidable mindleaks or has someone been reading the *Illuminatus!* trilogy? Hail Eris!

Dan Perkins
4432 Burge
Iowa City, IA 52242

Both, Dan, and — wait a minute... Doug just noticed a little synchronicity of our own right here on the letters page. Check out the last name of our first and last correspondents; the snake, indeed, has its tail in its mouth...

But to clear the boards right up front: Yes, Doug has read *Illuminatus!*, *Cosmic Trigger*, and *Schrodinger's Cat* (as well as several other closely related but unmentionable books), and heartily recommends them all. Indeed, Doug maintains a sporadic correspondence with Robert Anton Wilson himself — who, from time to time, has been known to peruse a comicbook or two in idle moments. See how serendipitous synchronicity can sometimes be?

Now, getting serious, on to the important facts: While Doug cannot claim to have written "The Phoenix and the Snake" deep in the inner sanctum sanctorum of the Chapel Perilous, he *has* visited the Chapel in strange times past, and with this in mind he wrote the story at a time when Sirius was rising, but only after thoroughly discussing the plot with Max. (Max is Doug's blind but exceedingly enlightened pooch.) And perhaps it should also be mentioned that a small statue of the Egyptian god Horus rests on the sill of the cathedral window overlooking Doug's desk. Furthermore, it was the 5th day of the week as well as the 23rd of the month, and halfway through the writing when an Aleister Crowley book toppled against an Aldous Huxley tome, whereupon both fell from shelf to floor causing Doug to look up and discover that his clock had stopped at 5 minutes to five. Finally, "The Phoenix and the Snake" was the 666th story Doug has written.

In closing, one last discordant coincidence (or synchronicity, if you will): Long before Doug had ever heard of the Illuminati, long before *Illuminatus!* or *Cosmic Trigger* had been written — nine years ago, to be exact — Doug's first prose story ever published (in *KNIGHT* magazine) was entitled "23 on the 23rd" — being an only slightly fictionalized autobiographical account of weird occurrences on Doug's 23rd Birthday: February 23, 1971. So just remember, enlightened ones, in the immortal words of Malaclypse the Younger: "Tis an ill wind that blows no minds."